



Paula T. Dow, Attorney General

An Important Message from Attorney General Paula T. Dow and NJ Division of Consumer Affairs Acting Director Thomas R. Calcagni:

## COMBATING IMMIGRATION SERVICES SCAMS IN NEW JERSEY

The Office of the Attorney General and the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs have joined with the Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on **"Combating Immigration Services Scams."**

Immigrants with limited English language proficiency often are targeted by unscrupulous individuals and businesses. Calling themselves **"immigration consultants"** or **"notarios,"** or falsely claiming they are attorneys, these scammers illegally provide bogus immigration services.

Immigrants who hire them are seeking legitimate, legal help with their immigration matters. Unfortunately, these scammers often charge hundreds of dollars to process immigration or residency documents – then fail to provide the services that have been paid for. **As a result, immigrants may:**



- ▶ Face financial losses they cannot afford;
- ▶ Lose irreplaceable documents such as birth certificates and passports;
- ▶ Find their immigration status harmed, and then face the possible risk of deportation, due to documents being filed incorrectly or fraudulently, or not being filed at all.

It is extremely important for immigrants to work only with those individuals who have been legally authorized to assist them with their immigration matters. In the United States, only an attorney\* can prepare legal documents such as immigration forms, give advice on legal matters, or act as a representative for another person in a legal proceeding.



When individuals solicit business by falsely claiming they are authorized to practice law, **they are committing a violation of New Jersey's Consumer Fraud Act** and may be subject to a penalty of up to \$10,000 for the first offense, and up to \$20,000 for each subsequent offense. Additionally, anyone who knowingly engages in the unauthorized practice of law **is committing a crime of the fourth degree and/or disorderly persons offense** under New Jersey law. **New Jersey's Attorney General and the Division of Consumer Affairs urge you to:**

- ▶ **SPEAK UP!**
- ▶ **PROTECT YOURSELF!**
- ▶ **EDUCATE YOURSELF!**

***It is important to understand that the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General cannot represent or otherwise assist individuals with immigration-related issues or paperwork. However, if you or someone you know has been taken advantage of by a Notary Public, you should***

**REPORT IT TO THE NJ DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS.**

The FTC provides educational materials in English, Spanish and Mandarin at **www.FTC.gov** to help legal immigrants in search of legitimate immigration services.

**800-242-5846 ■ www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov**

To report incidents of fraud to the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs call:

**1-800-242-5846**

e-mail:

**askconsumeraffairs@dca.lps.state.nj.us**

or visit:

**www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov**

For assistance with immigration papers, you can contact U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by calling:

**1-800-375-5283**

or visiting:

**www.USCIS.gov**

For education materials in English, Spanish and Mandarin, and for individuals seeking legitimate immigration services, visit The Federal Trade Commission at:

**www.FTC.gov**

\* U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) also allows certain Accredited Representatives to perform these services for immigration-related matters. To learn whether an individual or organization is authorized to do so, contact USCIS at [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) or 800-375-5283.

